

The Czech Republic and EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy

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1. Introduction- CFSP and the Czech Republic

The second pillar of the EU, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), has not been a problematic part of Czech accession talks. Extent of *acquis* is still rather limited in this area of EU activity and declared priorities of the EU are not in conflict with Czech policy vis-à-vis any third country nor topic. Expected simultaneous entry of Slovakia into the EU erased the only potential problem of Czech policy towards broadly defined external relations of the EU (if both countries entered the EU in different dates it would require the end of customs union and strengthened protection of Czech-Slovak border which would become the external border of the EU). Screening and negotiations concerning Chapter 27 (CFSP) were concluded rather quickly and CR has been routinely joining all CFSP acts whenever invited by the EU. Continuous harmonization in the CFSP area also proceeds smoothly.

However, in the meantime this area of EU activities has undergone dynamic change and since summer 1999, new political/military tools have been developed within the broad framework of CFSP- European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). This process will transform the EU into a full-fledged international actor, which will in the foreseeable future have at its disposal a broad spectrum of tools for support of its foreign policy, including a military force and assets lent to it by its member states. ESDP is developing in two major dimensions:

- A. creating institutions for analysis of crisis situations and for decision-making on EU actions covering conflict prevention, crisis management and crisis settlement. The EU gradually created the permanent bodies Political and Security Committee, EU Military Committee and EU Military Staff during the 2000-2001 period.
- B. improving European crisis management capabilities in both military and non-military areas. In December 1999, the EU agreed on the European Headline Goal- the EU should be able to deploy a European Rapid Reaction Force consisting of up to 60 000 men together with naval and air support for the entire spectrum of Petersberg tasks (search and rescue, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping operations including peace enforcement) by 2003. A

similar pledge was made in a non-military area where the EU commitment covers a police unit of rapid reaction of up to 5000 policemen.

CR will have to react quickly on a changing character of the EU second pillar and above all prepare for a much broader room for maneuver connected with full EU membership. Until now CR mainly followed EU policy and only in ESDP matters was more influenced by its position of Non-EU European Ally. EU membership will bring with it a possibility to shape more actively CFSP in all its aspects. CR will thus be in a position to influence this area both in a positive and negative sense. CR should therefore thoroughly analyze three major questions:

2. Major questions facing CR as a prospective new member of the EU are:

- What will be the specific Czech priorities in CFSP after the entry into the EU and what is the ability of CR to find support for them among other member states of the enlarged EU ?
- Is interconnection between national and European level of foreign and security policy working already in CR ?
- What will be the effect of Czech ability to participate actively in ESDP (both in military and civilian dimension) and contribute to the European debate on its content and focus? CR must be prepared to move beyond the issue of participation in ESDP which up to now has dominated the Czech position.

3. Czech profile in CFSP

The CR will have the opportunity to take part in activities of the second pillar of the EU including the EU's external relations and consisting of "classic" CFSP and new areas of ESDP in two basic ways:

- The first option is a passive support of CFSP which would mean continuation of the current policy and would mainly follow the mainstream combined with the "national" horizon of the foreign policy. Limitations of independent foreign and security policy of the CR could happen only when priorities of the CR and the EU would clash (Treaty on the EU obliges

the CR not to undermine CFSP EU where it exists). In practice this option would be just another phase of the passive experience and harmonization of the Czech foreign policy from the period of the EU accession talks.

- The second option reflects an active approach and is based on setting up several key priority areas which the CR will pursue in CFSP area and where it can find support among other EU members, while also being ready to spend necessary resources (political, human and financial) for its long-term support. This option is obviously somewhat more challenging:
- If the CR chooses this option, which geographic areas or thematic issues will it select as its priorities (Western Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus, Eastern Europe)?
- Which EU members are likely to support the Czech policy in respective areas?
- Where will Czech priorities in the EU complement those pursued in NATO? (e.g. NATO Contact Embassy in one of the countries of NATO Mediterranean Dialogue is a short term goal building on the successful Czech experience in Lithuania)
- This option presupposes sufficient intellectual capacity of the CR – not just in the executive branch like in MFA or The Office of the Government- but also through participation and support of Czech academic institutions (think-tanks, universities) and Czech NGOs which often have considerable experience with the above suggested priority areas or have the potential to contribute with new innovative ideas and specific projects
- The CR must already be focusing on preparing for the new way of functioning of Czech diplomacy in the EU context, especially through policy tools of forming and joining variable coalitions with other EU member states, combined with more permanent groups inside the enlarged EU (certain potential has in this way Visegrad or cooperation with Benelux or the Nordic countries). Active participation in CFSP also requires broad support of Czech initiatives across various political levels (president, prime minister, individual ministers, “Brussels”). In the near future there is an opportunity to utilize a period of EU observer status which the CR will hold approx. 6-8 months from signing the EU accession treaty.

4. Interconnection of national and European level in Czech foreign and security policy

Entry into the EU will create a new framework for Czech foreign and security policy – for the way it is formulated, implemented and supported throughout the Czech society. This change will be far more radical than in the case of Czech entry into NATO, especially given the broader scope of CFSP. Among others, the following factors are important:

- Broadening the horizon of Czech activities – CR will be perceived as an EU member which brings higher expectations and responsibility;
- European values, interests and aims should act as an important point of reference;
- Interconnection of CR activities with long-term priorities of the EU's CFSP, especially in the area of common strategies, joint actions and common positions;
- Question of CFSP coherence – both horizontal and vertical (i.e. between member states and the EU; and among various EU institutions) will be even more salient after the EU enlargement;
- CR will have to elaborate its views on CFSP reform plans (including the broadly defined EU External relations) as discussed in The Convention on the EU's Future. CFSP existed so far as a *Common* not a *Single* policy, but wider use of communitarian tools and approaches is probably inevitable;
- Higher demands on the quality of Czech diplomatic personnel on national and Union level (could also be combined with pressure to increase CFSP resources, including expansion of Solana's staff – for example Policy Unit from 30 to 120 or more people mainly through secondment). CR should be able to send top quality diplomats to this enlarged CFSP unit;
- Czech foreign service and its functioning will be in several ways radically affected – in headquarters (higher knowledge of CFSP, including existing *acquis* in this area should be improved in territorial and multilateral departments using among other things existing CFSP Database and specialized intensive training)
- in third countries: participation of Czech embassies in regular consultations in EU-25 format and sometimes even chairing these meetings; parallel example already exists in consultations

using NATO-19 format in many countries; EU-25 consultation will however require a much broader thematic focus

- in other Czech institutions (Office of the Government, Office of the President, Parliament). These bodies are especially not sufficiently prepared for the coming radical change in shape and focus of Czech foreign service;
- Necessity to create a clear Czech position (based on well informed analysis) on the direction the CFSP should take and reform steps that the CR should support (for example: Merging of Commissioner for External relations, Development and High Representative for CFSP? Increase of CFSP financial resources? New competencies of High Representative for CFSP? Relationship between CFSP and national diplomacies, including oversight role of national parliaments? Eventual creation of a single EU diplomatic service, including also the EU Diplomatic Academy?, etc.);
- CFSP financing through EU budget and contributions of member states for specific activities – higher expectations of Czech contributions in comparison to the time when the CR was still only a candidate country. After CAP reform more resources could be available for EU external relations activities. It is, however, still an open question as to which aims the EU will follow in civil and military areas, development and humanitarian aid, etc.;
- Long-term stabilization of the EU's new external border and the necessary slowdown of further enlargement of the EU will be determinants to the new Czech geopolitical situation – outside of the EU will remain Ukraine, Russia, part of former Yugoslavia (Western Balkans), etc. Perception of Us vs. Them will be necessarily changed (EU, incl. CR – neighboring states and wider world);
- A number of important parts of the EU's external relations is not sufficiently supported by Czech elites and public, which is sometimes rather ignorant about them – especially the size of development aid (CR is undoubtedly a member of the global North and in negative consequences of globalization has certain moral obligations towards poorer parts of the world); long-term engagement in reconstruction of post-conflict areas, presence of peacekeeping forces, civil-police capacities, etc. (here lies the comparative advantage of the EU); CR must intensively train and prepare its police, judicial, administrative and

humanitarian personnel for such EU missions. An integral part of this preparation is also a complex solution of their legal, social and health insurance conditions and status;

- Possible action conducted in defence of EU interests of territorial integrity will be a sensitive issue in the CR. Participation in EU operations conducted in the matter not directly related to the CR will have to be carefully explained to the Czech public and its support thus secured.

5. ESDP – active approach of EU member state and clarification of main terms and aims of ESDP in the CR

ESDP is a new EU policy complementing existing CFSP activities with new concrete tools. Although it still represents only a small part of the current CFSP actions, it has been developing as a dynamic policy area in both military and civilian dimensions and CR has to elaborate its own position on it. So far, Czech policy orientation on EU-NATO relations, issue of participation of Non-EU European Allies (NEEA) in ESDP and balance between both ESDP dimensions is not sufficient enough for a new position of EU member states.

CR must throughout its relevant policy-making institutions (National Security Council, MFA, MoD, Office of Government, President) clarify the existing shape of ESDP aims, tools and structures. They should be able to convey the basic positive message to Czech political elites and public alike. At the moment, a number of unhelpful myths, half-truths and unreal declarations dominate this area rather than clear-cut policy. This new approach could encourage a real Czech debate on ESDP that would define and clarify, at least partially, the Czech stance on major issues of European ESDP debate.

CR must as soon as possible think through its approach towards EU Strategic Concept in the ESDP area. This document should first of all answer whether there is a unique European way of crisis management and conflict prevention. If Strategic Concept is passed as an official document at the EU level the CR must then incorporate it into the basic principles of Czech security policy and intertwine it with NATO Strategic Concept which at the moment represents its basic pillar and international reference point.

ESDP, due to domestic limitations of several EU member states, is now confined mainly to Petersberg tasks as defined in the Treaty on the EU. Nevertheless, in the medium-term horizon, broadening of EU tasks and roles in security and defense area towards more demanding operations

with combat profile cannot be excluded. CR should already start preparing this debate and draw various options of its own contribution towards EU operations which must be incorporated into the defence planning process of the Czech military. Expanding security functions of the EU can lead up to the eventual creation of a special Protocol on article V on collective defence drawing on the existing Brussels Treaty and annexed to the Treaty on the EU (which its current version explicitly envisions as a possible future option). CR must consider pros and cons of such a proposal, especially vis-à-vis the dominant role of NATO as provider of collective defence guarantees.

CR must also decide about a detailed structure of its contribution towards the European Headline Goal (EHG) in both military and non-military aspects, including setting up practical limits (financial, material, human) of Czech participation in EU missions. A necessary part of this effort should also be deliberation of concrete priorities in the decision-making process concerning Czech participation in a specific EU mission. In the opposite end of the policy-making spectrum, Czech policy elites should clarify whether there is any area where the CR would like to use flexibility clauses of CFSP (constructive abstention). For CR as a smaller-size state financing issue is also important for the future creation of joint or common European military assets and capabilities – for example, tankers for in-flight refueling, strategic air transport, satellite reconnaissance and communication systems, missile defence covering Europe, joint operational air squadrons (Eurofighter, Gripen, Joint Strike Fighter), Suppression of Enemy Air Defense capabilities, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, etc. In a similar fashion, multinational military cooperation and specialization will become a necessary feature of enhancement of European military capabilities. Already today these principles are important in implementation of the European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) in the EU and continuation of the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI+) in NATO. CR should systematically support these principles and apply them in various formats (within the Visegrad group or with bigger EU/NATO countries).

CR has so far stressed in its approach towards ESDP priority of keeping balance between its European and US stance. Only the entry into the EU can after some time show whether this face of the Czech policy will be permanent or whether it was important mainly before entry into the EU while the CR was a full member of NATO only. Taking into account its current US security policy it is not absolutely clear whether the position of the CR is in practical issues closer to that of the United States or whether in number of principal issues it is closer to the European stance. On the other hand, there is a positive example of a country that is very active in both the EU and NATO, is

not one of a big EU member states and manages successfully to balance both priorities – the Netherlands. CR should pay much more attention to this model.

Weak spots of the Czech policy towards ESDP exist especially in military areas. Until now it has not been absolutely clear whether European dimension has been firmly incorporated into the fundamental pillars of our security policy. Skeptical views that often lag behind reality is still pervasive in many parts of MoD. A certain degree of caution and misunderstanding of the EU military initiative exists also in other parts of Czech politics. Military representation of the CR in ESDP bodies is nevertheless important and Czech MoD should already be intensively preparing our officers for EU Military Staff. Similarly, the CR must take into account that armed forces are being built with a long-term horizon and today's weapons systems are procured with a perspective of 20-30 years of operational use. CR should therefore consider new status of full member of both the EU and NATO in its defence planning given changing demands on the profile of activities of the Czech armed forces. Its professionalization is certainly a step in the right direction, but it is also necessary to possess a sufficient political will and readiness to use those forces, assets and capabilities in a concrete situation which may be politically sensitive.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

- CR should take an active part in the EU's CFSP immediately after its entry into the EU, focusing on a few carefully chosen priority areas. For detailed preparation of this active policy it is necessary to utilize the remaining time before entry in several aspects. CR must already be able to seek potential partners for its CFSP priority areas either on a case by case basis among EU great powers or on a more permanent basis inside subregional groupings – from Visegrad, through Benelux up to the Nordic countries. Also, the Czech foreign service and its functioning in third countries and in EU countries will have to be adjusted to the new policy-making style. CR must be ready to secure necessary human, financial and political resources for carrying out its priorities that must also be built on a long-term support for Czech intellectual infrastructure serving as a breeding ground for concrete proposals, projects or their implementation, especially through Czech NGOs.
- A successful Czech role in CFSP and implementation of its priorities in the CFSP framework will rely on a better integration between the national and European horizons of Czech foreign and security policy. Joint creation of European foreign and security policy must be based on a

deeper understanding of EU values, construction of EU interests and ways they are advanced among Czech politicians, civil servants and the broader public. Without this foundation it is impossible to build a long-term effective policy pushing for Czech priorities within CFSP. Czech public and political elites must in the medium-term horizon support this active policy, including use of military or police forces in EU operations. Otherwise, such a policy in the long run is untenable.

- Czech political representatives and executive and academic circles must also focus on the analysis of plans for the CFSP reform in concrete areas (institutions, coherence, tools, decision-making principles, financing) and the Czech approach towards them. With a long-term view of necessity to ensure and improve the EU's ability for action it is probably impossible to keep a strict intergovernmental approach that allows for easy blocking of EU actions or grinding them down to the least common denominator. For the CR it would be beneficial to support certain proposals for enhancing CFSP flexibility, although not necessarily reaching military area of ESDP proper.
- As far as the security and military dimension of the EU is concerned, covering foremost the new project of ESDP as an important CFSP tool, the CR must move out of the box of its current passive approach. Issue of participation in ESDP, which so far has dominated all Czech debates on ESDP issues, will be automatically solved with its entry into the EU. CR must be able to contribute to the topical European debate on ESDP, which goes beyond simple issues of EU-NATO relationship and keeping the dominant position of NATO in European security. At the same time it is possible to combine successfully pro-European and pro-Atlantic policy as shown by the example of the Netherlands. CR will have greater opportunities to influence direction and shape of the ESDP in the way in which it will not undermine the transatlantic link between Europe and the USA but on the contrary, it will strengthen it.
- CR should better harmonize the approach of individual ministries, other parts of executive, Parliament and president towards ESDP questions. Most important is this feature in issues of long-term orientation of Czech policy in the EU and NATO. The concrete task is integration of European military dimension into the long-term process of Czech defence planning, procurement of new major weapons systems and conceptual questions of security policy – e.g. specialization of armed forces of EU/NATO countries, pooling financial resources in providing

for expensive military assets and capabilities or their joint operational use in an international context.